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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NICOSIA 000767

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: CYPRUS: INCREASING TURKISH CYPRIOT EURO-SCEPTICISM

Classified By: AMBASSADOR FRANK C. URBANCIC FOR REASONS 1.4 (B)  
AND (D)

11. (SBU) Summary: The Turkish Cypriot UBP party, led by its leader and current "Prime Minister" Dervis Eroglu, are long-time euro-sceptics. Disappointment with the EU is growing among Turkish Cypriots who believe the Union has not kept promises made and that its policy towards Turkey and Cyprus is deeply influenced, if not managed, by the RoC and Greece. If Turkey and Turkish Cypriots turn away from the goal of EU membership, a key impetus to the reunification talks will be removed. End Summary.

12. (SBU) Turkish Cypriot "Prime Minister" Dervis Eroglu has frequently indicated to embassy officials that he has a largely unfavourable view of the European Union. A recent example of his distrust was seen at the reopening of a church restored with EU funding. When he was introduced to speak by the EU presiding official as "Mr." Eroglu, rather than as "Prime Minister," a clearly upset Eroglu made a speech demanding the EU (and the Greek Cypriots) accept the existence of the "TRNC." He later cancelled participation of 15 out of 21 TC participants at a long-planned EU-sponsored working visit to Prague on the environment. This prompted an angry letter from the EU stating the "government" did not understand how the EU works, offended the Czech hosts, wasted EU resources, and ultimately punished TCs and the Cypriot environment. We subsequently have been told that Eroglu referred to the proposed visit to Prague as a "brainwashing trip."

13. (SBU) The head of the EU Support Office which manages EU assistance to north Cyprus complains that 7500 Euro-diaries for schoolchildren are sitting in the storage room of her office basement because the "government" prevented their distribution due to the fact that they contain a short introduction by European Commission President Manuel Barroso that includes the word "reunification." Eroglu has therefore deemed the diaries "propaganda" material and will not allow their distribution. This reflects the UBP's resistance to a federal solution to the Cyprus problem. Supporters of a two-state settlement, the UBP blames the EU for shifting the balance in the current intra-island talks towards the Greek Cypriots by accepting them into the EU in 2004, "awarding Greek Cypriot intransigence and punishing Turkish Cypriot peace efforts" in the wake of the Annan Plan referendum.

14. (SBU) While Eroglu and his UBP party pay lip service to EU values and support Turkey's accession process, our interaction with UBP officials indicate that they hold different views. They argue that the EU has proven that it cannot be trusted, it's too "soft and lenient" when it comes to Greek Cypriots, too "aggressive and dominant" when it comes to Turkish Cypriots. "After all," they argue, the EU is -unofficially - a Christian club, and naturally pro-Greek (anti-Turkish). They strongly believe that Cyprus and Greece, as members of the EU, bias the Union against Turkish

interests and therefore cannot be considered an honest broker.

15. (SBU) The UBP's vision of Europe is shaped by a traditional, protectionist, Attaturkist view of Turkish society and Turkey's place in the world that has not been mitigated by recent changes in Turkish foreign and domestic policies. Central to the UBP's world view is a somewhat hostile attitude towards the motherland's" neighbors and a wary outlook towards Europe and the West in general, embodied in the old Turkish saying "a Turk has no other friend but another Turk." As an example, Eroglu has told us that during the run-up to the referendum on the Annan Plan, the EU and US were "deviously" working to convince Turkish Cypriots into voting "yes" to the reunification plan. Both then-"president" Rauf Denktas and Eroglu have attacked the EU and the US for "showering people with money" to back the allegedly pro-Greek Cypriot Annan Plan as a means to disenfranchise the Turkish Cypriot people. He still voices his "fears" regarding yet another EU/US effort to "deceive" people in a potential new referendum on a plan Christofias and Talat may devise.

16. (SBU) Comment: Eroglu has shared with Embassy officials on multiple occasions that he does not believe that the EU will ever accept Turkey as a member. Given widespread disappointment with the EU among Turkish Cypriots -a result of the EU not following through with promises of direct trade in the wake of the TC "yes" vote for the Annan Plan -Eroglu scores points with the general public when he demands that Turkish Cypriot sovereignty be maintained and questions EU fairness given Cyprus and Greece are both members of a club from which all Turks are denied a voice. In the run-up to the

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April 2012 presidential elections, UBP will continue to build on its position as a Euro-sceptic party, securing its base among relatively less educated, more Turkey-dependent members of the electorate, and benefiting from the growing disillusionment with the EU. If more TCs begin to view EU membership negatively, one of the key drivers for yes voters in 2004 will be gone. End Comment.

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